

COMBA Apex Park Management Plan Whitepaper

Background

Cyclists have respectfully and overwhelmingly participated in Apex Park management plan public comment process including all of the Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS) open house events and Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) meetings leading up the October 1st meeting – thank you! Let's make ourselves proud by continuing our respectful participation in the public process tonight.

The original COMBA proposal, which had support from members of all user groups, proposed extending Enchanted Forest parallel to Apex Trail down to the lower trailhead, and adding a new short trail up to the Pick'N Sledge overlook. The county's proposal implemented the short overlook trail, but also added the directional uphill travel restrictions on the new trail, Apex Trail, and Enchanted Forest which we continue to oppose.

The county's "compromise" plan was delivered following a meeting between Schell and COMBA president Terry Breheny, and two weeks of phone calls and 600 messages of opposition from the cycling community. The "compromise" plan does not represent much compromise, but it is a testament to the power of people speaking up and asking for change.

The community alternative COMBA presented to JCOS included five of the eight "actions" from the JCOS proposed plan, but rather than implementing the last three directional uphill travel restriction "actions", instead COMBA would fund and run a peer education program -- a mountain bike Ambassador program modeled off IMBA's national program.

What COMBA is asking of the Open Space Advisory Committee:

- Reject the JCOS recommended Apex Park management plan as it now stands
- Recommend a new compromise plan which implements five of the eight "actions" from the current JCOS proposal:
 - Create a new multi-use trail from the Heritage Square trailhead to connect to Pick n' Sledge Trail
 - Design segments of trail utilizing calming techniques on Apex Trail to reduce speed differentials for all users
 - Establish sections of new trail alignment for safety and sustainability
 - Incorporate features along Apex Trail of interest and challenge for biking
 - Construct pullouts, install signs and trim vegetation as necessary to improve visitor safety throughout the Park
- Endorse peer education through a mountain bike ambassador program -- a solution which has proven successful across the country
- Study the effects of these less intrusive "actions" before even considering bans, restriction, or alternating day usage policies.
- Pursue long-term solutions in the form of new trails designed and managed specifically for mountain bikers to draw cyclists away from heavily used multi-use trails to help mitigate the speed-differential issue.

Important Points to Consider

- We love these parks. Always be respectful and professional to park managers, OSAC members, and other community members. Do not be baited into being antagonistic.
- At least 398 of the 570 total comments received in the initial public comment process by JCOS were from the cycling community.
- There have been an additional 700+ letters sent to the county in opposition to their proposal.
- There are 26 trails and three full parks in the JCOS system where bicycles are banned, of these five trails and two parks are within a five minutes walk from Apex Park.
- The only restrictions in the JCOS proposal are against mountain bikers.
- Restricting access at Apex will result in mountain bike usage shifting to other parks. As usage

shifts, problems and restrictions will follow.

- The JCOS currently has rules that regulate park visitor behavior such as yielding regulations. If the county cannot enforce these regulations upon “bad apples”, it will not be successfully in enforcing new travel restrictions.

What to Expect at the Open Space Advisory Committee meeting

- The meeting is at 7 PM at the JCOS Administrative Offices, 700 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO.
- COMBA will host a pre-meeting at the Apex Park lower trailhead beginning at 5 PM
- If you arrive via bike, please park your bike in a non-obstructive location.
- Other community members will be there to object to our park access. Always be respectful and polite. We are asking for the common sense proposal and we will prevail.
- This is a public meeting where many different items will be on the agenda. The meeting may run very long and many of us will be without seats. Bring water, snacks and warm clothes.
- You will be asked to sign in and are given the option to request to speak on the sign in sheet – this is your chance to have your voice heard!
- Personal comments delivered to JCOS and OSAC weigh very heavily in their decision. Jefferson County residents are especially encouraged to speak.

Notes About Jefferson County Open Space

The open space park system started as a citizens’ movement led by [PLAN Jeffco](#). After much campaigning by 400 PLAN Jeffco volunteers, the Jefferson County voters, on November 7, 1972, approved taxing themselves 0.5% to fund the purchase of open space and the Jefferson County Open Space park system was born. The parks and their funding have had to be defended by the citizens of the county several times since 1972.

Jefferson County Open Space has a staff of over 90 full time employees and is currently led by Director Ralph Schell and managers of five sections. Information about the individuals currently holding these positions can be found at: http://jeffco.us/openspace/openspace_T56_R132.htm.

In addition to these staff members, the [Open Space Advisory Committee \(OSAC\)](#), a citizens advisory board, makes recommendations regarding Open Space policy and procedures to Jefferson County's Board of County Commissioners. OSAC holds monthly public meetings.

The [Trails Use Task Force \(TUTF\)](#) is a group comprised of citizen volunteers from the majority user groups (equestrian, hiker and mountain biker) intended to provide user group feedback to JCOS and OSAC, focusing primarily on user conflict. There are three cycling representatives and three alternates on TUTF. There is currently no formal structure in place for the appointment, tenure, or qualifications of these representatives.

Your Thoughts

Your thoughts and comments are more important than ours. Please take time before the meeting to talk and discuss these issues with others. Use the space below to record your notes for the meeting.